

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 28 August 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
28 AUGUST 1968

1. Czechoslovakia -
Soviet Union

Czechoslovak leaders returned from Moscow faced with the hard task of convincing their people that the agreement hammered out with the Soviets is the best that could be hoped for. According to the communiqué issued after the four-day meeting, present Czech leaders will remain in power. Soviet troops, however, will remain in Czechoslovakia until the situation returns to "normal."

Dubcek made it plain, in an emotional speech to the nation, that new restrictions would have to be clamped on press and radio media. He indicated that the occupation troops would soon begin a phased withdrawal from urban centers to less conspicuous areas. Both he and Svoboda appealed for discipline and understanding from the Czechoslovak people.

Initial public reaction to the Moscow agreement was one of protest. Crowds marched in Prague shouting, "We want the truth." The demonstrators dispersed after a parliamentary deputy assured them that no agreement infringing Czechoslovakia's sovereignty would be ratified.

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2. Rumania

The atmosphere in Bucharest is more relaxed than over the weekend, when Rumanian armed forces appeared to be in an initial state of alert.

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3. Israel-Egypt

Tel Aviv is taking a grim view of an incident along the Suez Canal Monday night. Two Israeli soldiers were killed and a third captured by Egyptian troops who crossed to the Israeli side.

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The UN truce supervisory chief is taking their protest to Cairo today. Hopes for an early release of the Algerian-held Israeli plane may also deter a military reprisal.

4. Soviet Union

A mobile missile launcher has been seen in satellite photography at Plesetsk, the missile and space test center north of Moscow.

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When photographed early this month, the launcher was in firing position at a pad designed for solid fuel missiles. So far, however, we have not identified any flight tests for this missile.

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5. Communist China

Satellite photography shows that construction at the intercontinental ballistic missile launch facility in western China has moved ahead considerably over the last several months.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Propaganda Support: Communist propaganda continues its exhortations on behalf of the current Communist military push. In South Vietnam, Liberation Radio reminded the residents of Saigon that 25 August was the anniversary of Communist uprisings in the capital city 23 years ago. It called on the people of the capital city to "encircle and fight (the enemy) more fiercely" and conveyed the impression that the Communists were engaged in an unrelenting offensive in the cities. The broadcast was probably laying the groundwork for claims of popular support in future attacks.

According to a domestic broadcast of 26 August, General Vo Nguyen Giap has urged sick and wounded soldiers to recover quickly and return to the battlefield or new training responsibilities as soon as possible. At a meeting to honor representatives of sick and wounded soldiers and survivors of "fallen heroes," Giap lavished praise on the sacrifices of soldiers and their families, describing them as "shining examples of revolutionary heroism and warm patriotism." He reminded his audience that the "imperialists are stubborn" and that the struggle required still more sacrifice and renewed commitment on everybody's part.

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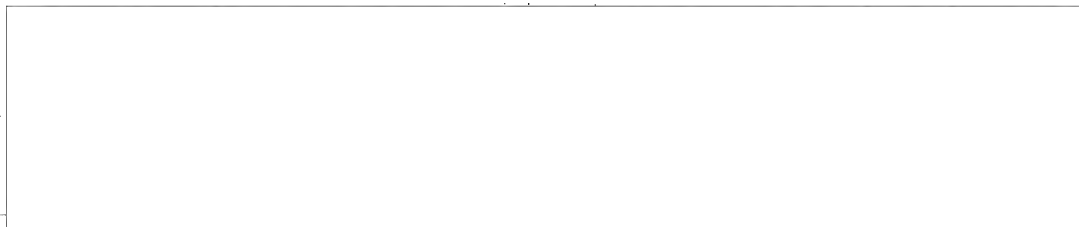
Chinh's Speech: Hanoi Radio has broadcast excerpts from a speech Politburo member Truong Chinh gave on the occasion of Karl Marx's birthday. Chinh was addressing a major party gathering apparently called to discuss in depth some of the major problems facing the North Vietnamese party and to disseminate the official line decreed by the Politburo. The radio-broadcast emphasized that Truong Chinh was speaking on behalf of the party leadership. The excerpts of the speech which Hanoi has made available suggest that it is the latest in a long series of articles which

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try to demonstrate to the rank and file that the leadership is aware of and has the answers to the major problems facing Vietnam.

Chinh's speech is mostly a reiteration of familiar positions on such topics as the necessity of armed revolution and the leading role of the Communist Party. Taken in the context of present circumstances, some of his points provide further evidence that Hanoi has long-range plans for the unification of North and South Vietnam. Others seem to reflect a concern over the adverse effects of the regime's harsh measures on the populace.

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Tropical Storm Impedes Southward Flow of Supplies: Mid-August storm activity off the southern coast of North Vietnam may have impeded the southward flow of supplies through Thanh Hoa Province. Heavy rain and flood warnings were frequently passed over the North Vietnamese civil network beginning about 11 August. Weather data subsequently showed that tropical storm "Rose" moved inland on 13 August. In the aftermath, flooding was reported in several areas of North Vietnam and especially along the Song Ma River in Thanh Hoa Province.



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Vietnamese Students Arriving in Moscow: Tass has announced that 500 North Vietnamese students arrived in Moscow on 20 August to begin a six-year program of study. The Soviet press had earlier announced the arrival of 295 North Vietnamese youths.

The students were probably sent under the agreement formally signed with North Vietnam in July 1967 which provides for the education and training of 6,000 Vietnamese students in Soviet professional and technical schools and enterprises in the period 1967-69.

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Tass further announced that a total of 1,500 Vietnamese will begin studies in the USSR in September. There are about 6,000 Vietnamese students in the USSR for various types of education and training.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi Comments on the Democratic Convention: Both the Hanoi press and North Vietnamese spokesmen in Paris emphasized the importance of antiwar sentiment in the US as the Democratic National Convention opened. The Hanoi press representative in Paris spoke almost exclusively of the upcoming election at his weekly news conference on 26 August and called the attention of reporters to the long line of "statesmen, labor leaders, intellectuals, and generals" who had appeared before the platform committee advocating changes in US policy on Vietnam. He said he was confident that during the election campaign the American people would demand a change in US policy from its present and future leaders. He had praise for all those who pressed for an unconditional cessation of the bombing and for recognition of the Liberation Front. A Hanoi party daily on 27 August took virtually the same line, stating that the Democratic Party was deeply divided on Vietnam as it met to choose its new leader.

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